



## ***Providence Emergency Management Advisory Council (PEMAC)***

**591 Charles Street,  
Providence, RI 02904  
2 September 2015  
2:00 PM  
MINUTES**

### **Call to Order by the Chairman:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Elorza, Mayor of the City of Providence, at approximately 2:07 p.m.

### **Attendance:**

The Honorable Jorge Elorza, Mayor  
Steven Pare, Commissioner Public Safety  
Michael Borg, Director Providence Emergency Management Agency  
Hugh Clements, Chief Providence Police Department  
Scott Mello, Acting Fire Chief Providence Fire Department  
William Trinqué, Director Providence Communications Department  
Carolyn Arias, Deputy Director Providence Communications Department  
Vladimir Ibarra, Deputy Director Providence Emergency Management Agency  
Theresa Agonia, Deputy Chief of Staff City of Providence  
Marisa O'Gara, Deputy Chief of Staff City of Providence  
Alan Sepe, Director City Operations  
Russell Knight, Director Providence Public Works Department  
Peter Ginaitt, Safety Director Lifespan  
Ricky Caruolo, General Manager Providence Water  
Jim Demers, Director of Complex Security Dunkin' Donuts Center Providence  
Elaine Richards, Public Safety Department  
Tempie Thompson, Executive Director American Red Cross  
Jennifer Howley, Rhode Island School of Design  
Christopher Harwood, Johnson & Whales University  
Allen Spiver, City of Providence  
Matt Shumate, City of Providence

It was noted that quorum had been met for the meeting.



### **Welcome by the Mayor & Public Safety Commissioner**

Chairman Elorza thanked members for their service and for helping shape emergency management policies that will move the City of Providence forward. He stated that during his short tenure he has learned that as a City, in order to meet goals, we must continue forging partnerships with the community and only these partnerships will help to continue managing disasters.

Commissioner Paré highlighted the work that PEMAC members have been tasked to do and for sharing their instrumental experience and efforts. He looks forward to better prepare the City and address areas of improvement.

**PEMAC Purpose:** Director Borg stated that the PEMAC purpose was to act as conduit to the community, address gaps, look for opportunities and make recommendations. Although it was a lofty mission, he believes it is only achievable with your input.

**Old Business:** Director Borg discussed some of the projects that were completed during the previous administration including: the EOC expansion, Tom-Tom installation, Hazard Mitigation Plan adoption, the Rhode Island Business Alliance, and the winter storm NEMO activation. There was a brief discussion on the dwindling federal grants with level funding on most projects leaving an open question as to how to continue sustainability efforts.

### **New Business:**

**Collaboration:** Director Borg highlighted his vision for the lines of effort in the different planning areas (preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery) and how each would be nested towards training, drills, and full scale exercises in an strategic 5 year plan.

PEMA has been reaching out to internal and public private partners to enhance preparedness and further collaborate in training and exercises. Also, there are plans to leverage technology as a force multiplier to create a Common Operating Picture platform, mutual support database and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for public safety use. Director Borg went to state that besides technology, PEMA plans on leveraging community assets through Community Emergency Response Teams and volunteer recruitment. These two efforts include, engaging neighborhood captains and faith based organizations to make Providence a resilient City.

**Funding:** Mr. Borg discussed an aggressive campaign pursuing grant funding from private, state, federal and foundations focusing on collaboration and the four phases of emergency management.



## **Accreditation**

The Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) is a voluntary peer reviewed accreditation process that involves a set of 64 standards designed to assess local and state emergency management programs. Providence was the first city in the country to be accredited in 2010 and will be the first re-accredited city in the country when the Director meets with the Program Review Committee on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Laws & Authorities**

The PEMAC is established in conformance with the City of Providence Codes of Ordinances, Chapter 7, Section 7-1 et seq. Two items were reviewed and voted on. First item was meetings, under the current by-laws PEMAC shall meet three times per year. Director Borg made a motion to change the meeting times to once annually. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The second item was membership. According to the by-laws the current membership of the PEMAC is fifteen members. Director Borg made a motion to expand the membership to include more public private partners from fifteen to twenty five. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Incidents, Exercises & Activities**

There were several incidents that PEMA responded at the beginning of 2015 including Winter Storm Juno and Linus and the most recent Macro Burst Weather Event.

For Winter Storm Juno the Emergency Operations Center was activated for forty-eight hours, the emergency support functions (ESF) activated were 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 13, and 15.

Some of the activities that PEMA has participated include writing the Incident Action Plan for the Providence 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and National Night Out participation.

Director Borg briefly discussed the recent Complex Coordinated Attack training sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security/Emergency Management Institute designed to improve the ability of local jurisdictions to prepare for, protect against, and respond to complex coordinated attacks. Several city departments, municipal, state and private stakeholders participated in the week long training in Emmitsburg Maryland. The City is waiting on the final report by DHS which will help address challenges and funding opportunities.

## **Equipment**

PEMA received a Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) grant sponsored by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency and was able to procure one burn pan for training.



## New Initiatives

- Common Operating Picture (COP), Director Borg is looking for a single integrated picture built on the RICOP foundation to establish situational awareness and enhance decision making. The COP would integrate all of the City's resources into one screen for a persistent capability, cross departmental application, and seamless integration with our partners.
- The Mutual Support Database, is building on the Rhode Island Business Alliance initiative and it builds on the foundation of a resilient city by allowing to share, procure, lease, resources. This effort is being examined by the Providence City Solicitor.
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), is an emergency management tool that would enhance situational awareness. Director used the example of the March five alarm blaze that broke out in an abandoned factory building on Kinsley Avenue and the cross departmental utility of an UAV in those kinds of situations. This effort requires an FAA Certificate of Authorization and Administration and City Council guidance, input and buy-in.
- Code Red notification system, Purvis the current notification system for the city is going out of business as of September 30th. However, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency will purchase the Code Red notification system for all 39 cities and towns for emergency use only but the paperwork needs to be signed by the Mayor. Also, Code Red has additional messaging features that would allow the City to send non-emergency notifications such as parking bans, citywide events, and severe weather for an additional cost.
- 5 Year Strategic Plan & Emergency Operations Center upgrades. Director Borg informed members that the information systems would be upgraded as well as other PEMA assets with EMPG funding. For the 5 Year Strategic Plan he plans to combine training and exercises events along a continuum of grant strategy while increasing volunteers.

## Community Input

Director Borg opened the meeting up for feedback. Mr. Ginaitt discussed the current fiscal austerity that requires sustainability and long term vision and commended PEMA for proposing a five year strategy.

Commissioner Pare discussed the dissemination of timely forecast to the Providence business community. Director Borg interjected that PEMA has established a public



private situational awareness briefs during incidents and with Code Red he sees a great opportunity to improve communications.

**Closing comments:** Director Borg informed the membership that the recovery coordinator is creating standard operating procedures for tracking work based on lessons learned from Juno.

The Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee will start convening to lay the groundwork and prepare for the next submittal in 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The next meeting will take place September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016.